

Charity and the JAMband - Family Values

Kids' Classic Rock from San Francisco

By Warren Truitt, About.com Guide

Charity Kahn and her JAMband have been rocking for over a decade, and their latest album, *Family Values*, continues the rock. Listeners shouldn't deduce from the album title that this is a CD full of conservative, judgmental tunes that espouse a vision of America driven by fear of the unknown. Charity Kahn is simply presenting the idea of a global, interactive family in which all of us look after and take care of each other. Right on.

The Band

San Francisco-based Charity Kahn has been conducting movement and music classes for children for over a decade, and her music CDs play a big part in her philosophy of Joy and Music for kids and their families. *Family Values* is Charity and The JAMband's fifth album, following up 2009's *Party Like a Twinkle Star*, one of the very few non-compilation double albums in the kids' music genre; 2006's *Rock Your Socks Off*; the 2004 release *Peanut Butter and JAM*; and the band's 2002 kids' music debut *JAM: Music for Movement with Children*. For more information about Charity Kahn and her JAMband or her movement classes for children, visit the official Charity and the JAMband web site. You'll find lots of free kids' music downloads, as well.

The Music of 'Family Values'

Family Values begins with The JAMband's "Peace Pledge," a spoken word statement that reiterates Charity Kahn's beliefs about thoughtfulness on both the personal level and on a global level. The chunky riff of "Family Values" follows, celebrating our individualities and similarities with a swirling Soundgarden funk. "Lovingkindness" is a sweet, simple tune about peace and happiness. The fairy tale tune "Lemonade" lopes along with Neil Young-like verses and incorporates some of the song structure of the classic "And the Green Grass Grew All Around," while the reggae rhythms of "Bike" extol the joys of two-wheeled freedom. The piano ballad "Love is Here" reminds us that love is ubiquitous if you just look around. The tune is a great lighter-lifter once it gets to the chorus, and contains hints of James Taylor's "Country Road," from his 1970 album *Sweet Baby James*. "Ice Cream" celebrates summer treats while lifting its structure and sound from Led Zeppelin's "Black Dog" from the 1971 classic *Led Zeppelin IV*, ending with a searing guitar solo by JAMband member Daryn Roven.

More Music from 'Family Values'

The strummed strings of a mandolin and the dancing notes of a piano carry the sweet "Valentine," while the groovy, laid back verses and power chord choruses of "Flower Power" are reminiscent of a Peter Frampton tune. "Green Beans Everywhere" uses complex chords and tons of harmonies to bring up the subject of childhood hunger, and the song's sound and structure will remind you of Joni Mitchell. The jaunty, sing-songy "Grateful" asks what you are thankful for, while "We are the Ones" encourages proactive thinking and actions via a tune that sounds a lot like The Allman Brothers Band song "Ain't Wastin' Time No More" from their 1972 double album *Eat a Peach*.

The Verdict

Charity and The JAMband know their classic rock references. They also have an agenda: have fun but be thoughtful. All the songs on *Family Values* emphasize in some way the importance of mindfulness, making human connections, treating everyone and everything with respect, all while enjoying one's existence. Too heavy for a kids' album? Not by a long shot, because children sometimes are better able to help us adults keep those things in mind. *Family Values* will make a nice addition to your kids' music collection, especially if you're a fan of classic rock vibes. And make sure to check out the thought-provoking quotes interspersed throughout the lyrics booklet.

Released November 6, 2012; Raindrop Records

Track Listing

1. "Peace Pledge"
2. "Family Values"
3. "Lovingkindness"
4. "Lemonade"
5. "Bike"
6. "Love is Here"
7. "Ice Cream"
8. "Valentine"
9. "Flower Power"
10. "Green Beans Everywhere"
11. "Grateful"
12. "We are the Ones"